

DECEMBER 14:--(con't)

The meeting was held and four people (Ozamoto, Masunaka, Murakami, and Ikkanda) were chosen to represent the body in meetings with the Administration. Because these four were chosen by the body representing the people of Manzanar, these four were now considered to be spokesmen for all the people of Manzanar.

DECEMBER 15:--

Today was a routine day. Nothing out of the ordinary (to my knowledge) happened in Manzanar.

DECEMBER 16:--

Since most of the people are not wearing black bands on their arms, I discarded mine.

According to a story I have heard (fairly reliable) someone was attacked this afternoon by a gang of ruffians. The person who was assaulted was suspected by the group of being an informer for the FBI. How true that is, no one knows.

DECEMBER 17:--

This morning, a "meeting" was called for the Nisei members of this block in which I reside. Between twelve and fifteen Nisei showed up. A Kibei (who belongs to the dominate party in Manzanar, undoubtedly) was in charge. He said that two Nisei has gone (at different times of the day) to Mr. Merritt's office to say that the four people on the Negotiations Committee (Ozamoto, etc.) were not representative of all the Nisei in the Center. In addition, it was disclosed that Mr. Merritt was in receipt of a telegram from the outside saying the same thing. At this point, the Kibei interjected with, "How could be that person outside know more than us in here?" (Of course, no one writes letters.)

The point of view expressed by the two Nisei and by the telegram confused Mr. Merritt which in turn confused the Negotiations Committee. The four men on the Committee threatened to resign; however, the difficulties were finally ironed out at an emergency meeting of the delegates.

The Kibei in charge of this morning's meeting referred to the two Nisei who went to see Mr. Merritt as "doublecrossers who are trying to check our work." Then he stated that "doublecrossers" are not wanted. He also emphasized that all questions, suggestions, and the like should not be sent directly to the Administration, but should be routed through the organization which is "representing all the people in Manzanar."

At the Block meeting of the Nisei, three people asked the Kibei various questions regarding the policies, stands, and issues of the group "representing all the people in Manzanar." Not one of the questions was answered adequately. The Kibei didn't know much. Undoubtedly, there are no definite policies or issues set up by the organization. One order by the organization which has been stressed time and time again was repeated once more.

That was--any type of work which is not directly connected with the sustenance of life is distinctly discouraged.

This is really a glimpse of totalitarian Japan or Germany. One small clique is running the Center; no other party is allowed to flourish. The greater mass of people are too lethargic and is indifferent to organize any means of combatting the evil which is running amok.

Mail is not distributed to us now. All persons desiring mail must stand in line at the General Delivery window of the Post Office. The current rumor explaining this move on the part of the Administration sounds very plausible. It is that in the former method of mail distribution, the mail for each block was left at the Block Manager's office. With such a system, people could very easily look into other persons' mails. It is strongly suspected that this was done.

Another item of interest is that the organization "representing all the people of Manzanar" wants all outgoing mail to clear through their offices. Presumably, it wants to read the letters which are posted. What marvelous lives we lead!

The Spanish Consul is in Manzanar. Nisei have not been encouraged to see him as he is here primarily to speak with the Issei. Apparently, he is on a routine visit of all W.R.A. relocation centers.

DECEMBER 18:--

An announcement was made this evening regarding a meeting which was held this afternoon with the Spanish Consul in Attendance. We are to go back to work tomorrow. (Saturday). The details are not clear as yet, but the main point is that something was done in the form of mediation or arbitration. I wonder what will follow now.

DECEMBER 19:--

At 8:15 a.m., I was in the Community Services Division Office. The entire place was much changed. Desks and chairs were moved out and the furniture which remained were re-arranged. No one was working and about seven people were gathered around one of the stoves. Mr. Thomas M. Temple, Mr. George Akahoshi (TMT's assistant), and Miss Barbara Dougherty (TMT's secretary) weren't yet there.

At a little before nine o'clock, Miss Dougherty arrived at the office. She told about five of us that everything was still in a big mess. No one actually knows what is to be done. She said that there is to be a reorganization of every department in the Center. Non-essential workers will not be rehired. Then, we were informed that all of us were already off the "pay-roll" by Administrative orders. Naturally, that stunned all of us. Each one of us was subdued. I had to laugh (and the others joined in with me) because though we lost our jobs, it wasn't as if we lost our future. After all, we were receiving only sixteen dollars per month.

After we laughed, we all felt better and looked at our problem more objectively.

It seems that directly as a result of the outbreak, a complete change of administrative policies with regard to work in the various departments is in order. Some departments will be enlarged and others will have to be decreased. This re-organization policy will be felt in all of the departments; therefore, a great many people will be put out of jobs. What will be done to provide employment for them is not clear.

Today, when we all want back to our jobs expecting to pick up the work where we left off two weeks previously, we were disappointed to discover that our positions are not longer open. That was a bitter potion to swallow. All this time that we had been inactive, we were eagerly awaiting the time that we would go back to work. Time hung heavily on our hands. On the first day of work; we found that it was not our first day of work. We found instead that we were released from our jobs. Irony!

Even the Center Administration has undergone a few changes. Two of which I know are: (1) Mr. Temple is no longer Chief of the Community Services Division, and (2) Mr. Bob Brown is Acting Assistant Project Director. Undoubtedly, other changes will make themselves known in the near future.

The Education Department is also hit by this. Dr. Carter does not know what lies within her jurisdiction now. The school set-up, system of teaching, will be changed. Everything in that department is also in a mess. Many workers will be released.

Now, it will be up to the various department heads to determine which people are essential and to rehire persons on that basis. Many of the workers seem to have become a little cynical. Today, the general feeling at the office paralleled the tight, expectant, tense feeling of December 8, 1941.

As an indication of the tense mood of spirit, here is an account of what occurred at our mess-hall this afternoon shortly before lunch was served.

The kitchen time-keeper (who, in addition to other duties, keeps a record of the number of people eating at the mess-hall at each meal) and a mess-hall cook were involved in an argument over a very small point. Food was being rationed out to mess-halls. There has been a prevalent fear that food might be stopped altogether. The cook accused the time-keeper of allowing people residing in other blocks to eat at the mess-hall. In normal times, the quarrel would have been settled amicably; however, in this case, the argument must have reached some sort of a climax--the time-keeper came out second best, with a gash on his head.

Later, apologies were made and surface feelings were thus assuaged. But the fact remains that a small matter had led to a fight between two grown men. How must the rest of the population of Manzanar feel if this incident can be some sort of indication? As a rule, the time-keeper is a mild, nice gentleman. What has happened to these two people can well happen to many others. Is another riot on its way? Given the leaders (many hot-headed rabble rousers are still in the Center), will the people forget themselves under the psychology of the mob? I hope not, but only time can tell!

DECEMBER 20:

The two Co-op stores re-opened their doors for business this morning. And what business! People rushed to the stores in hordes; however, it was an orderly stampede. People stood in lines (this is getting to be a habit now) for the privilege of going into the stores to purchase goods. Some people were forced to wait an hour or more. The stores really had a marvelous day.

This evening, an announcement was made at the mess-hall (thus interrupting supper) by the Block Manager. Tomorrow morning (9:00 a.m.) at Mess-hall #1, there is to be a meeting for all the people who lost their jobs because of the recent shuffle. Also, it was disclosed that funeral services for the two people who were killed are to be held tomorrow. In memory or out of respect to the two dead young men, all mess-hall gongs are to be rung "gently and with reverence" for two minutes beginning at 1:00 P.M. tomorrow.

DECEMBER 21:

The meeting at Mess-hall # 1 turned out "stinko." The Kibei boys were not very courteous. There was still a good deal of yelling and disturbance evident. Mr. Ralph P. Merritt, the Project Director, spoke. No one translated his talk. The Kibei boys said (or rather, shouted) that translation was unnecessary. In other words, the loud mouthed individuals did not want to hear the Administrative side of the picture. Prior to Mr. Merritt's arrival, someone shouted, "Ta ta ke!" which means "Beat him!" Fair minded people, aren't they?

According to the Project Director, the Camouflage Net Construction Project is not to re-open. The reason given was that working on camouflage nets prepared no one with vocational training which can be used after the war is over or after persons leave this center. Other types of work, such as the Garment Factory, Furniture making Factory, and the Ceramics Project, will replace the Camouflage Project. Mr. Merritt pointed out that the persons who work in the Garment Factory will be encouraged to relocate after a three-month training period.

Note: As yet, not one the substitute projects, i.e., ceramics or furniture making, has made its appearance here at Manzanar. Some took for the Garment Factory have arrived; however, the factory itself has not yet started.

Mr. Merritt urged all persons who lost their jobs to register at the Personnel Office.

DECEMBER 22:

I registered at the Personnel Office today. According to them, there are no jobs available; however, on the application card, I noted that I wanted to work for the Adult Education Department.

DECEMBER 23:

According to an unsigned announcement which appeared, if a person who registered for re-assignment fails to get work within two weeks, he will receive sixty per-cent of his wages. The "wages" detail is not defined so it is uncertain whether it means previous wages or average wages.

DECEMBER 25:

According to the Manzanar Free Press (the first issue since the trouble began), the sixty percent of the wage announcement is true. The sixty percent ("unemployment compensation") begins fifteen days after the filing for a job.

Last night, small Christmas parties were held at various blocks for the children. A group of about 150 persons went Christmas caroling. We sang at the Children's Village, the Hospital, various block parties, and at the Administrative Housing. At the Project Director's apartment, a small cup of apple cider was given to each caroler. That was a nice gesture on the part of Mr. Merritt.

DECEMBER 26:--

I have discovered that I have not lost my job yet. I have been on the roll for the entire month of December with the exception of the two weeks in which I was at my leisure.

After a short discussion with Mr. Charles K. Ferguson, Director of the Adult Education Department, I have obtained the position of Supervisor of Planning and Program Development.

JANUARY 4:--

There was a notice posted today in the Mess Hall which stated that the Negotiation Committee met yesterday (Sunday) with Mr. Merritt and Mr. E. R. Fryer, Assistant Regional Director. A hearing is to be granted for the people still in custody.

School was supposed to begin today, but the re-opening was post-poned one week.

Today, we received our July Clothing allowance in cash. Each person over the age of eighteen received \$5.75 for that month's allowance.

JANUARY 5:--

The story today is that six men were taken by the Military Police yesterday afternoon. The story sounds authentic, but as yet is unverified.

JANUARY 10:--

Today, a notice signed by the Negotiations Committee appeared at the Mess-hall. It declared that the suspects who were at the jail in Independence are now at the Moab Relocation Center in Utah pending hearings.

JANUARY 11:--

School reopening was postponed again. The reasons are not yet clear. The Adult Education classes are the only ones which will start tonight.

Registration for the Manzanar Junior College started today and will continue for a week. Many courses are being offered.